

BORN
IS THE
KING

BY LAUREL MOFFATT

SCRIPT & DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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BORN IS THE KING

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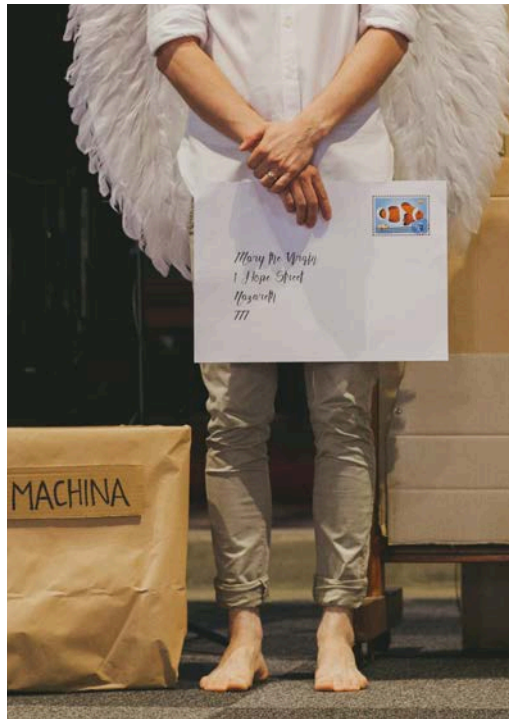
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Many thanks,
Laurel Moffatt





A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

A couple of years ago I went searching for a nativity play for the family Christmas service at my church in Sydney, Church Hill Anglican. But not just any play, I was looking for something that was:

- **True** to the Gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus,
- **Compelling** in its presentation of the Gospel for both kids and adults,
- **Easy-to-use** for both small and large, older and younger groups of people,
- **Musically Familiar** with traditional Christmas carols,
- **Lighthearted** in a way that enlivens the hearts of its hearers, and of course,
- **Well-crafted**

I'm sure there are other resources that balance the lighthearted with the serious, that nestle right in to Scripture without necessarily quoting large slabs verbatim, that present the Gospel clearly to both kids and adults without excluding either, but I couldn't find them easily. So, I wrote one.

I hope that *Born is the King* can be of service to your church or school and your community this Christmas, and that it can be used as a winsome witness of the great love that our Father has lavished on us in the gift of his Son, Jesus, our Forever King.

In Christ,

Laurel

Laurel Moffatt

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Promotional image by Micah Etheredge
Photographs by Elize Strydom

BORN IS THE KING

-DIRECTOR'S NOTES-

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAY

Born is the King is a nativity play based on the accounts of the birth of Jesus found in Matthew 1:18-2:12 and portions of Luke 1-2. It lasts approximately 50 minutes.

This play would suit a cast of both adults and children, or different-aged children from nursery age to adult. Some parts are better for older children or adults (such as Gabriel, Mary and Joseph), while others are perfect for the children in your crèche or nursery program (such as the sheep or extra angels).

CAST OF CHARACTERS (MINIMUM 12)

Gabriel

Mary

Joseph

Roman guard

Jesus

Landlords (3 - can also play the shepherds)

Angels (1 speaking role)

Shepherds (2)

Sheep (at least one)

Star

Magi (2-3)

CHARACTERS, COSTUMES AND PROPS

Although the focus of the play is on the arrival of Jesus, the Forever King, Gabriel is the lead role. Gabriel serves as both the narrator of the play, a character in the play, and as the leader of the service. Gabriel introduces the carols within the action of the play, signals to the congregation when to sit and when to stand, and communicates to musicians as needed. This character can prompt the other characters, if lines or movements are forgotten.

This is a play that could be played in a more minimalist fashion, with children in their normal clothes, with just the suggestion of a costume provided at the time of the play (as long as it is clear that shepherds are shepherds, sheep are sheep, angels are angels--more fearsome than cute, and wisemen are wisemen). Or, it could be more elaborate, with more ornate costumes. The choice is yours.

Character	Suggested costumes/props
Gabriel	Wings Bible Jesus ultrasound picture* Joseph's Dream sign* Red paper hearts* glued on sticks for Mary and Joseph Countdown calendar*
Mary	Pillow
Joseph	Hat Small suitcase
Jesus	White outfit Cardboard box for manger
Landlords (3)	3 large cardboard boxes (crafted into house fronts) Hay
Shepherds (2)	Sticks or staffs Could be the traditional dressing gown and tea towel ensemble, or a more modern interpretation of shepherd
Sheep	Fleecy sheep outfit
Angel(s)	Wings Breastplate
Wisemen (3)	Fancy hats Binoculars or kid-crafted cardboard spyglasses Boxes wrapped and decorated to be gold, frankincense and myrrh Robes in bright fabrics (if you want to get fancy)
Star	Sparkly star costume* (Follow that Star Costume Sewing Pattern now included!)

* included as either a printable prop or sewing pattern

PROP BOX

For the *Born is the King* service at my church, we found it helpful to have a prop box on 'stage' to store all the props in for Gabriel to retrieve and give to characters when needed.

MUSIC

This service uses traditional carols. You could choose other ones, of course. But I have chosen these particular carols because I thought they fit well within the action of the play. Within the play I have either mentioned specifically or alluded to:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Once in Royal David's City
Angels We Have Heard on High
The First Noel
Joy to the World

One of the strengths of this service is that the music of *Born is the King* is not a performance, but rather something that all present enter into. By using traditional carols it is more likely that these songs are familiar to your audience and therefore do not have to be learned beforehand. The carols are sung by cast and congregation alike. The pressure is also removed from the children to remember and perform the music.

There is one exception to this: Mary's Song. This is a song based on Mary's Magnificat that you can have the character of Mary sing.

Ideally, musicians should remain 'on-stage' for the duration of the play (in order to keep the pace of the play moving smoothly), dressed in costumes in keeping with the drama, such as those of shepherds, angels, wise men or Roman guards.

DIGITAL FILES AND RESOURCES

The play is distributed to you in PDF files in two forms; one with director's notes, and one without. The latter is particularly helpful if you would rather print the script alone for the cast.

The resources designed to complement the nativity play are located in the folders named 'Printable Props', 'Promotional Images', and 'Sewing Pattern'.

The promotional image can be used as a cover for a program, as a smaller image in a church order of service, as Facebook and Instagram friendly images, or as a poster or cover of a program for a play. There is even a vector file. They are all free and ready for you to use for the purpose of promoting your service. My hope is that this resource would be flexible and useful for your church or school this Christmas.



The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

ISAIAH 9:26-7

BORN IS THE KING

-SCENE ONE-

GABRIEL PREPARES THE STAGE

Instrumental: 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel'

STAGE DIRECTIONS-

- * *While music plays Gabriel prepares the stage by making sure the prop box is ready and that the stage is ready for the action to begin*
- * *As music comes to an end, Gabriel stands centre stage with a Bible in his hands*
- * *Music ends. Gabriel looks out into the faces of the people in the congregation and lets a moment of silence rest before speaking and reading Isaiah 9:2,6-7*

GABRIEL The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

- * *Gabriel closes the Bible*

GABRIEL It's been a long time since Israel had a king - a real king that is. The golden days of King David have long since gone. And all the kings of long ago were rather disappointing, as they were only ever shadows of God's promised king, the Forever King to come.

GABRIEL But that's all about to change. You see, the Forever King is about to enter the stage, but not in the way that you might expect a king to arrive.

God has sent me, Gabriel, to the village of Nazareth, to bring news of his arrival to a girl named Mary. The news I bring isn't exactly what you'd call easy. But it's good. It is very good news indeed.

But first, just before I arrive at Mary's door, sing with me and ask God to come and be with his people.

* *Gabriel invites congregation to stand and sing*

Carol: 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel'

* *During the carol Gabriel gets the ultrasound picture*

* *Gabriel then moves off the stage*

* *During the last verse or two Mary enters stage and stands at a table pretending to knead bread dough*

-SCENE TWO-
GABRIEL BRINGS NEWS TO MARY AND JOSEPH

STAGE DIRECTIONS-

- * *Gabriel may enter the stage but remains invisible to Mary until the music of his entry sounds*
- * *Entrance music*
- * *Gabriel enters*

GABRIEL Mary! You have found favour with God!

- * *Mary looks afraid*

GABRIEL Don't be afraid!

MARY If you didn't want me to be afraid, you probably should have knocked first.

GABRIEL I don't think knocking would have helped with this one.

- * *Gabriel gives the ultrasound image of Jesus to Mary. Mary holds ultrasound so that the audience can see the image*

MARY I'm not exactly sure what this means...

GABRIEL You are going to have a baby, the Son of God Most High. You will call him Jesus, for He is the Forever King.'

MARY The Forever King! *(Mary pauses)* But how can I have a baby, I'm not even married?

GABRIEL God is with you. And nothing is impossible with God.

* *Mary looks worried*

GABRIEL *(slowly, with kindness)*
God's *(points up)*
With *(crosses both arms over chest)*
You *(points to Mary)*

MARY

* *Mary sings, accompanied by a musician on piano, or guitar*

MARY'S SONG

[this content not available in sample]

MARY If God is with me then I do not need to be afraid. God is the one who takes fear and turns it into gladness, who takes tears and turns them into songs. *(pauses)* But...I should go tell Joseph. He'd probably like to know this *BEFORE* the wedding.

* *Mary 'exits' stage*

* *Joseph enters stage and pretends to build something...for example, he pretends to hammer pieces of wood*

* *Mary re-enters the stage and approaches Joseph at his workbench*

MARY Hi Joseph, what are you doing?

JOSEPH Oh, hi Mary. I'm just building a cradle for no apparent reason.

MARY You never know Joseph; it could come in handy in about nine months.

JOSEPH *(surprised)* What? Does this mean? ...

MARY Yes!

JOSEPH You have a FRIEND who is having a BABY?!

MARY No! *I* am going to have a baby, the Son of God Most High. We will call him Jesus and he is the Forever King. *(Pause)* Surprise! I'm having a baby!

JOSEPH Mary, I think I need some alone time right now.

* *Mary exits Joseph's part of the stage*

GABRIEL This is hard news for Joseph to bear. Maybe he could get out of his promise to Mary. Perhaps a quiet divorce. Amicable, quick, polite. Just a little scrollwork, a stroke of a stylus, and he'd never have to think about it again. Mary would just be this girl he loved once.
(Pause)
But that has a hardness of its own. Joseph falls asleep and begins to dream.

- * *Joseph sits or lies down and sleeps. Gabriel may brush his hands over Joseph's eyes to signal his falling asleep, or hold a sign that reads 'Joseph's Dream'*
- * *Musicians play a lullaby*
- * *Sheep (children from crèche) led by shepherds (crèche workers) enter stage and walk past Joseph and assemble quietly on the other side of the stage*

GABRIEL (to audience)
Of course, it's impossible to hide from God. God can find us wherever we are, even in our dreams. Which is just what Joseph finds.

- * *Gabriel enters Joseph's dream, carrying the ultrasound picture*

GABRIEL Joseph. Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

- * *Gabriel shows Joseph the ultrasound picture*

GABRIEL See, Mary is going to have a baby, the Son of God Most High. You will call him Jesus. He is the Forever King.

- * *While Gabriel is speaking to Joseph, Mary is in the background, finishing her kneading and then pretends to put bread dough in an oven*

JOSEPH Your will be done Lord.

- * *Joseph walks to centre stage front. Mary walks to centre stage front. They stand side by side*
- * *Gabriel hands paper hearts on sticks to Mary and Joseph*
- * *Joseph goes to Mary's side and they smile at each other, and hold up paper hearts on sticks, signalling Joseph's acceptance of God's plan*
- * *Gabriel gets calendar from prop box.*

GABRIEL Joseph obeys God. And time passes.

Days turn into weeks, and weeks turn into months, and the months fall away as the baby King grows in Mary's belly.

- * *Gabriel holds the countdown calendar for congregation to see*

GABRIEL Count with me. 9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1

- * *While Gabriel and the congregation count down the months, Mary goes offstage and adds pillow to belly*
- * *While Gabriel is still counting Mary reappears and Mary and Joseph stand at centre stage until the counting ends*

GABRIEL Soon it is almost time for the King to come.

JOSEPH Bad news Mary. Caesar has decided he wants to count everybody.

MARY That Roman is obsessed with numerals.

JOSEPH He's told everyone to go back to their hometowns to be counted. And since my hometown is Bethlehem...

MARY But that will take days!

JOSEPH Well, we should get going then.

GABRIEL (to congregation)
And while they travel, we will sing of this little town,
Bethlehem.

* *Gabriel invites congregation to stand and sing*

Carol: 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'

- * *Mary and Joseph pick up a small suitcase and travel around the church or the auditorium while the congregation sings the carol*
- * *During the carol bring the houses or inns onstage and the landlords hide inside or behind their houses*
- * *At the end of the carol, the Roman soldier stands centre stage with clipboard and pencil as Joseph and Mary approach the stage from the centre aisle*

THIS IS NOT THE END